



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

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Grand Teton National Park News Release

Injured Backpackers Rescued from Cascade Canyon

Grand Teton National Park rangers rescued two injured backpackers from the south fork of Cascade Canyon yesterday evening, July 4. Will Behrens, age 78, from Windson, California, had been hiking the Teton Crest Trail with his son, 50-year-old David Behrens, from Idaho Falls, Idaho, and David's 16-year-old son. The party was descending in the south fork of Cascade Canyon, approximately 1.5 miles below Hurricane Pass, when all three hikers slipped and fell through an opening in a snowfield around 2:30 p.m.

First, David's son fell through the opening, landing in running water underneath the snow. He sustained injuries to his face and knocked out several teeth. Then, while attempting to help his son, David fell through the same opening, injuring his left knee. Will tried to remove himself to a safer area, but he too slipped on the icy slope, falling into the same hole and hitting his head. Will had the party's two ice axes strapped to his backpack, as they had decided not to use the ice axes in this area. The Behrens managed to extricate themselves and their gear from the hole and remove themselves to a safe place where they could set up their tent and put on dry clothes. David's son then hiked out of Cascade Canyon, reached a visitor with a cell phone near the west shore of Jenny Lake, and contacted Teton Interagency Dispatch.

Due to the late hour, the party's location and the potential for serious injury, rangers decided to coordinate a rescue with the park's contract helicopter. The rescue staff monitored local thunderstorms closely, and were able to fly six rangers to the scene at 7:45 p.m. Rangers assessed the two patients, provided emergency medical assistance and transported the two patients about 500 feet to a helicopter landing zone in the south fork of Cascade Canyon. The helicopter then flew David and Will to Lupine Meadows at 8:55 p.m., and a waiting ambulance transported David and his son to St. John's Medical Center in Jackson for treatment. A ranger accompanied Will to St. John's Medical Center in Will's vehicle.

This marks the fourth major search and rescue effort in Grand Teton National Park this year.

As snow continues to melt in the backcountry, hikers and climbers are reminded to be cautious in areas where snow is poorly consolidated, where water flows underneath the snow, or where rocks and fallen trees cause snow to melt unevenly.

Grand Teton National Park 75th Anniversary ~ 1929-2004
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